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THE DOCTRINE

OF THE

HIGHER CHRISTIAN LIFE

COMPARED WITH

THE TEACHING OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

BY

REV. ALVAH HOVEY.

Non saltu, sed cursu, ad æthera tendens.

5726 H4

BOSTON:
HENRY A. YOUNG & CO.,
26 SCHOOL STREET.

[1870]

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PREFACE.



MUCH the larger part of this examination was published in "The Journal and Messenger" in 1873, and also read before the Massachusetts Baptist Ministers' Institute in 1874. Since then, the writer has been asked more than once to give the discussion a permanent form; and there seems to be some reason for doing this, in the circumstance that the doctrine examined is said to be gaining adherents among the people. If this be so, it should be closely studied in the light of God's Word; and the following pages may perhaps furnish assistance to Christians in seeking to ascertain the meaning of certain passages of Scripture which are appealed to in proof of a "second conversion" and a consequent "higher Christian life." They may be called Biblical studies with reference to a particular theory of the method of divine grace, and are committed to the reader in the hope that he will find them useful.

ALVAH HOVEY.

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"THE HIGHER LIFE."

INTRODUCTORY.

IN undertaking a comparison of the doctrine of "The Higher Christian Life," as it is sometimes called, with the teachings of the Word of God, the writer is deeply sensible of many perils lying in his way; for such a comparison must involve a certain amount of controversy, and controversy is very apt to lead those who engage in it to adopt partial views of truth. Moreover, this peril is not confined to those who engage in the discussion: it extends to all who take a lively interest in the question, and can only be shunned by constant watchfulness and supreme love of the truth. Hence the writer is extremely anxious to treat the subject in such a manner that those who agree with him may have

their sense of obligation to live a holy life, and their hope of rapid growth in grace, strengthened, while those who disagree with him may be profited in some way rather than irritated and injured. The task is plainly a difficult one, but by the blessing of God it may perhaps be accomplished.

But why should this task be undertaken at all? For two reasons. *First*, the question at issue between those who advocate the doctrine of "the higher life," and those who reject it, is one of great practical importance. This might be said of almost every question which relates to the substance of Christian truth; but it can be affirmed with special emphasis of the one now under consideration, for its bearing on religious character and life is both direct and powerful. The type of piety exhibited by those who receive the doctrine may be easily distinguished from the type of piety seen in earnest Christians who reject it; and the connection between doctrine and life, in both cases, is very manifest. This, then, is one reason for the present discussion: the question at issue is of great practical moment. And, *second*, there are many sincere

Christians whose minds are perplexed on this subject. Desirous of ascertaining, if possible, whether the doctrine in question is true or false, they wish to have it carefully examined in the light of God's Word, in order that, if found to be true, they may receive it, and, if false, reject it. The prospect of doing something to satisfy the desire of these brethren, by removing doubt and perplexity from their minds, is a strong and prevailing reason for attempting to compare the doctrine of "the higher life" with the language of the Sacred Oracles. Even partial success in such an undertaking would be a great reward. To these reasons may properly be added the remark that religious discussion, with all its perils, is not only serviceable in defending the truth, but also conducive to a better knowledge of the truth itself. Its effect in the latter direction is often remote, but generally certain.

POINTS OF AGREEMENT.

Before describing those features of the doctrine of "the higher life" from which the writer feels himself compelled to dissent, it will be proper to

mention a few points of agreement between that doctrine and his own, that the reader may be in possession of the whole subject, and be able to estimate correctly the divergence of the former view from the latter. And, *first*, the piety of many persons who must be esteemed Christians is mournfully defective. Their faith in the promises of God is weak, their hope of eternal life faint, and their love to the souls of men inoperative. They make no visible progress in the divine life. They give no evidence, by word or deed, that "the joy of the Lord is their strength," or that "the kingdom of God," as known by them, "is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." After years of connection with the church, they remain babes in Christ, having little more strength than when they first tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come. Thus they appear to be like the Hebrew Christians, who were still ignorant and immature when they ought to have been already well instructed and able to distinguish the truth from error (Heb. v. 12–14). It is and must be for a lamentation, that so many of the Lord's

redeemed ones know so little in the present life, of the exceeding riches of his grace toward them that believe. This course of thought anticipates a *second* point of agreement; namely, that the experience of Christians, immediately after conversion, is not the highest which they should expect in this life. However sweet and joyous it may be, this experience is the sparkling brook rather than the mighty river; and every affluent from the hills of providence on the one hand, or of grace on the other, should increase its volume and power. The work of renewal is only begun, not finished, by regeneration. This is the doctrine of the Bible, as well as of nature; and therefore every Christian should expect to "grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ" until the hour of his death. But many do not look or seek for this. Many live as if they supposed the work of sanctification to be carried as far, at the moment of the new birth, as it will ever be carried on the shores of time. Such a view, it is almost needless to repeat, has no support in the Word of God, and no analogy in the constitution and course of nature. It cannot, there-

fore, be deprecated and opposed too heartily. A *third* point of agreement may be found in the belief that sanctification is wrought by the Spirit of God. As he regenerates the soul by imparting to it a holy disposition, so he carries on the work thus begun by increasing the power of that disposition, and subduing the evil tendencies which oppose it. Hence love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance, are said to be the fruit of the Spirit. Hence also it is said that the Spirit is opposed to the flesh, and the flesh to the Spirit. Turning away, then, from the question of means and modes, it is important to observe that those who accept the doctrine of "the higher life" agree with those who reject it, in ascribing the work of sanctification to the Holy Spirit. A *fourth* point of agreement may be discovered in the belief that sanctification is complete before the soul enters Paradise. No relish for evil, no selfish or sinful desire, will pollute the spirit when it bids adieu to the present state, and enters into rest. Yet the agreement in this fourth particular may not be perfect. Christians who profess

to enjoy "the higher life" commonly hold that sanctification is completed in every case before the moment of death, while many others believe that it is completed in the very article of death, — a difference of much greater importance than it seems to be at first sight. In his works, vol. vi. pp. 531, 532, Mr. Wesley thus speaks of Christian Perfection: "I believe this perfection is always wrought in the soul by a simple act of faith; consequently in an instant. But I believe [in] a gradual work, both preceding and following that instant. As to the time, I believe this instant generally is the instant of death, the moment before the soul leaves the body. But I believe it may be ten, twenty, or forty years before." Probably he intended to explain the words, "instant of death," by the words, "moment before the soul leaves the body."

POINTS OF DIFFERENCE.

Having noticed a few points in which the writer agrees substantially with those who teach the doctrine of "the higher life," it is now desirable to fix attention on the two great

features of this doctrine which seem to him unscriptural and dangerous. The *first* feature is its division of Christians into two distinct classes; one embracing the few believers in Christ who have experienced a second spiritual change, subsequent and analogous to their regeneration, but raising them to a definitely higher plane of holy living; and the other embracing the many believers in Christ who have not experienced this change, but remain on the lower plane of ordinary Christian life. And the *second* feature is its estimate or account of the moral state of those embraced in the former class; for it assigns to them a degree of faith and devotion which is described now as "Christian perfection," then as "entire consecration," now as "perfect trust," and then as "perfect love," but always as something which separates them by a vast interval from Christians who still mourn over the weakness of their faith, and plead with God for the pardon of their daily sins.

OBJECTION AND REPLY.

These are the two distinctive features of the doctrine, and therefore it is necessary to compare them with the representations of Christian life in the New Testament. If they agree with those representations, it is the duty of every Christian to accept them; if they do not, it is equally the duty of every one to reject them. But at this point a difficulty is sometimes met. Must not experience, it is asked, count for something in the interpretation of Scripture? If an affirmative answer must be given to this question, can any one who has not experienced the blessing of entire sanctification be supposed to understand the Bible, if it speaks of this blessing? and is it not the duty of those who have not attained "the higher life," to take the testimony of those who have, as to the reality and perfection of it? To meet the difficulty thus suggested, it may be said, first, that spiritual discernment is possessed in some degree by all who have been created anew in Christ Jesus; secondly, that the writings of the New Testa-

ment were nearly all addressed to ordinary instead of eminent Christians, and were adapted to their spiritual state; thirdly, that the Bereans, though recently converted, were praised by Luke for testing the doctrine of an apostle by comparing it with the ancient Scriptures; fourthly, that the history of our religion proves it to be the duty of every believer to study the Sacred Oracles for himself, with a confident hope, that, doing this in a right spirit and with proper care, he will learn the truth; fifthly, that it is quite as easy for a good man to interpret the Word of God as to interpret his own experience, to determine the sense of inspired language as to determine the degree of holiness in his own heart; and, finally, that nearly all religious enthusiasts and fanatics plead in their defence an inward light or experience which enables them to find in the Scriptures truth hidden from others. It does not, then, savor of arrogance for any honest believer in Christ to test the doctrines which he is asked to receive, by placing them side by side with the Word of God.

DIVISION INTO TWO CLASSES.

STATEMENT OF THE QUESTION.

IT is conceded by all that faith, hope, and love are capable of growth in a soul which has been regenerated by the Spirit of God. It is also admitted that some believers in Christ are manifestly in advance of others, apprehending more truth, feeling more trust, having more zeal, and doing more service. Christian experience does not conduct man, as by a straight path, across a level plane, to a point no higher than the one which he left at conversion. There is progress into a higher and a purer state; and the question now to be answered concerns the method or law of that progress. Are Christians in the present state living on one and the same plane, sloping upward to the height of perfection by a gradual ascent, or are they living on two separate planes, one far above the other? The

latter is understood to be the view of brethren who profess to enjoy what is called "the higher life." Into the experience of this life they believe that Christians enter by a distinct change, subsequent and analogous to regeneration. This change is thought to be described in the New Testament by such expressions as these: being "renewed" by the Spirit, "sealed" by the Spirit, "transformed" by the Spirit, or "baptized" in the Spirit. In order, then, to test the correctness of their belief, the language of Scripture must be closely examined; and this may be done conveniently by endeavoring to ascertain whether the ordinary style of the apostles favors this division of Christians into two separate classes, and then, whether the particular expressions enumerated above point to such a division.

CLASSES OF CHRISTIANS.

Do the Scriptures, and especially the writings of the apostles, separate Christians into two great classes? The epithets which are applied by Paul to the Christians in Rome, in Corinth,

in Philippi, in Ephesus, are very strong, and seem to be used indiscriminately of all those addressed. These are recognized as "the saints," or "holy ones," the "called," the "justified," the "sanctified," the "washed," the "holy brethren," as "new creatures," and as "temples of the Holy Ghost." These expressions, and others of similar import, seem to be applied to all addressed, in consideration of their faith in Christ. Whole churches are saluted as if they were composed exclusively of persons who were justified, sanctified, holy, even when they are afterward reproved for manifold sins. It is natural, therefore, to suppose that the terms used were meant to be expressive of the legal state and prescribed character of those in the churches, of what was now their standing in Christ, and of what they were certain to become by his grace. They were represented as belonging to the class of the holy, not because they were such already in fact, seen by themselves, but because they were such in germ and in prospect, by virtue of the indwelling Spirit, who had begun the work of sanctification, and would surely carry it on until the day of final redemption.

There is, however, in certain passages an intimation that some believers are "perfect," while others are less advanced, or only "babes" in Christ; but the term "perfect," like the terms "holy," "sanctified," and the like, is obviously used in a qualified sense and denotes a mature Christian, well grounded and well instructed in the gospel of salvation. It is applicable not to novices in Christian life and doctrine, but to those who have made considerable progress, and, "by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." In this sense Job was perfect, David was perfect, and the apostles, with many of the early Christians, were perfect; but not in the sense claimed by those who advocate the doctrine of "the higher life," not as having an experience specifically distinct from that of other saints. Indeed, the word "perfect" is used in a broader sense than either "justified" or "sanctified," since it characterizes one as fit for a particular service, whether that service require mental, spiritual, or other qualities in him who undertakes it. It may be necessary to recur in another connection to the biblical use of

this word; but for the present it is enough to say, that a close examination of the passages in which the apostles refer to certain Christians as "the perfect" will make it evident that they ascribe to them nothing more than a high degree of Christian experience, understanding, maturity, without any allusion to a second renewal, or to complete holiness of heart. Hence the question proposed above must be answered in the negative. The Scriptures, and especially the writings of the apostles, do not separate Christians into two great classes, but rather treat them as all one in Christ, as justified, sanctified, saved, when viewed from the divine side, but as being sanctified and being saved when viewed from the human side.

RENEWAL OF CHRISTIANS.

Do the Scriptures speak of a "renewal" of Christians, distinct from, and subsequent to, their regeneration? And, if so, what is the character of this renewal? An answer to these questions may be found in certain passages of the New Testament; but that answer will not

agree with the doctrine of "the higher life." In Titus iii. 5, Paul asserts that salvation is effected "by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;" thus distinguishing, it is said, the work of "regeneration" from a subsequent work of the Spirit called "renewal." This, however, is a doubtful interpretation of the apostle's language, it being quite as natural to refer both terms, "regeneration" and "renewal," to the same act of the Spirit. For two or more words of slightly different meaning are often used for the sake of emphasis, in describing the same event, especially when, as in the present case, the different words each present striking aspects of that event. But, even if the two words here employed denote separate acts of the Spirit, the latter may refer to a process by which the former is completed. There is nothing in the apostle's language to forbid the supposition that the word "renewing" signifies a gradual, protracted work of sanctification, ending only with life.

Indeed, this interpretation of his words to Titus is favored by a passage in his second letter to

the Corinthians, iv. 16, which may be translated thus: "For this cause we faint not; but, though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward is being renewed day by day." A process of decay in the one part of his being, a process of renewal in the other! And the latter must be what is commonly spoken of as "growth in grace," or the process of sanctification; not a *saltus*, not a sudden vaulting from one plane of experience to another; but a growth "day by day," month by month, year by year, till the body is laid aside by death.

This, too, is the only natural view to be taken of Paul's language in the preceding chapter of the same letter, iii. 18: "But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." The apostle is here speaking of Christians, as such, in contrast with Jews. A veil was still upon the hearts of the latter, when Moses was read; but in the gospel the former, with unveiled face, beheld as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, and were inwardly transformed from one degree

of glory, or likeness to Christ, to another; and this progressive sanctification, through the truth of the gospel, was wrought by the Lord, the Spirit. The note of Alford is correct: "The change here spoken of is a *spiritual* one, not the bodily change at the resurrection; it is going on here in the process of sanctification;" and again, "The process of renewal after Christ's image is such a transformation as may be expected from the agency of the Lord, the Spirit; Christ himself being the image." See chap. iv. 4.

In obvious agreement with these passages is the language of Paul in Col. iii. 9, 10: "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, who *is being renewed* unto knowledge after the image of him who created him." The translation given is that of the Bible Union, with which that of Alford and that of Noyes are nearly identical; and it is clear, from this improved rendering of the Greek original, that the "renewal" was conceived of by the apostle as continuous, progressive, and therefore incom-

plete in all those whom he was addressing. Nay, more: by the exquisite precision of his language he describes the act of "putting off the old man and putting on the new man" as completed in the past, that is, at conversion; while the renewal is described as both present and incomplete: "Ye did put off the old man with his deeds, and did put on the new man, who is being renewed," &c.

With these characteristic expressions of Paul may be joined the exhortation of Peter in his second epistle, iii. 18: "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Here the grace and knowledge of Christ are represented as the atmosphere or element in which Christians are exhorted to grow; and this growth must be a gradual increase of faith, love, hope, and joy, with their natural fruit, holy conduct.

SEALING OF CHRISTIANS.

Do the Scriptures speak of certain Christians as being "sealed" by the Spirit after their regeneration? And, if so, what was the nature of

this blessing? President Mahan, in his work on "The Baptism of the Holy Ghost," lays great stress on Eph. i. 13: "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." "Here," he says, "we have the order of facts as developed in actual experience, — as the hearing, then the believing, then finally, after believing, the sealing with the Holy Spirit of promise. . . . when God gives his Spirit, that is, his seal to the fact that the believer has been 'accepted in the beloved,' and is in covenant relations with 'the Father of lights.' Until this gift is received, we have no token from God that our sins are blotted out, and we his sons and daughters." It is scarcely necessary to remark that Dr. Mahan identifies this "sealing" with the "baptism of the Holy Ghost," and with entrance into "the higher life." Indeed, he adds, "It would evince infinite presumption in us to hope in God, and not receive from him, as we may do, absolute assurance of the validity of our hope."

But the passage in Ephesians has no reference to "the higher life," as explained by Dr. Mahan. Strictly translated, it reads thus: "In whom ye also [as well as we], when ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation — in whom [I say] when ye also believed [as well as heard] ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of the promise." There is no evidence afforded by this text that any interval of time elapsed between the act of believing and the act of sealing. It is, however, not improbable that many of the Ephesian converts had received certain extraordinary gifts by the Spirit at their baptism, and that these are referred to by the apostle; for, as in the case of Cornelius, such gifts would be strong evidence of the new life of Christ. If the expression, "Ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit" who was promised, was meant for all the members of the church in Ephesus, there was but one class of Christians there; but, if it was meant for a part of them only, it is most natural to presume that those who had received "spiritual gifts" — as the power to speak with tongues or to prophesy — were in the apostle's mind.

This will be yet more evident when the baptism of the Holy Ghost is considered.

The following remarks of Archbishop Whately appear to be very just. After quoting the words of Paul, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in you?" and other passages referring to the indwelling and sanctifying of the Spirit, he proceeds thus: "Now, all this was so opposite to all their former notions, so strange to all their habits of thought, that they might well need some special assurance of such a doctrine as this, — some support against the uneasy doubts and suspicions which might suggest the question, 'Is the Lord among us, or not?' And such an assurance was graciously afforded them in the sensible testimony of his presence, which God displayed by conferring powers manifestly miraculous. Not, however, be it observed, that they were to regard their extraordinary gifts as the only or as the most important *instance* of spiritual influence, but as the *proof* and pledge of it. The truly important benefit was the sanctification by the Spirit, with a view to eter-

nal life. *The miraculous power was the seal and earnest of that benefit,* — the sign and notification, as it were, that the treasure had been bestowed; not the treasure itself." (P. 240, "Essays on Difficulties in the Writings of Paul.")

The sacred writers do not, then, by their general style of address, separate believers in Christ into two great classes, one embracing a vast majority of "the saints," and the other embracing a small number who have entered upon "the higher life;" nor do they point to a transition from one of these states to the other by speaking of Christians as being "renewed" or "sealed."

BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT.

But, in examining the arguments employed by those who advocate the doctrine under consideration, another question presents itself, viz.: —

Do the Scriptures speak of a "baptism in the Spirit" after regeneration, as something to be expected by all Christians to the end of time? President Mahan, in his work on "The Baptism of the Holy Ghost," answers this question in the affirmative, with a positiveness of assurance

which might be natural in one who had the gift of inspiration. But a repeated and prayerful study of the record has constrained the writer to reject this answer, or at least to modify it so greatly that Dr. Mahan would find it of no service whatever in defending his theory. The results of this study will now be given as briefly and clearly as possible.

According to every one of the evangelists, John the Baptist proclaimed beforehand that his greater successor would baptize in the Holy Ghost (Matt. iii. 10, 12; Mark i. 7, 8; Luke iii. 16; John i. 33). According to the Gospel of John, the Saviour himself promised to send the Comforter, the Spirit of the truth, after his departure, to the disciples, to recall his words to their minds, to show them things to come, and to guide them into all the truth (John xiv. 26, xvi. 13). According to Luke in his Gospel, and in the Acts, this "promise of the Spirit" by Christ referred to the same thing as the "baptism in the Spirit," predicted by the harbinger of Jesus (Luke xxiv. 49; Acts i. 4, 5); and according to Peter this baptism in the Spirit, or

power from the Holy Ghost, was foretold by the prophet Joel, and fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 16, 33). Let the reader examine for himself the passages quoted in support of the statements just made, that he may be sure of their meaning. For, if the baptism of the Spirit foretold by John was identical with the work of the Spirit promised by Christ, it certainly embraced the gift of inspiration, and, indeed, the other miraculous gifts of the first age. That it included the gift of inspiration, may be learned from the description of the Spirit's work in the promise of Christ, from the command which the apostles received from their Lord to tarry in Jerusalem without entering upon their official work until that promise was fulfilled, from the miraculous gifts conferred by the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, from Peter's explanation of the wonders of that day, and from similar gifts afterward bestowed. Every one of these points deserves earnest consideration.

INSPIRATION DESCRIBED IN THE PROMISE.

The language which the Saviour used in describing the work of the promised Spirit shows that the giving of inspiration was a chief part of that work. "But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things which I said to you." "When the Comforter is come, the Spirit of the truth, he will bear witness of me. And ye also shall bear witness, because ye are with me from the beginning." "I have yet many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now. But when he, the Spirit of the truth, is come, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak from himself, but whatever he shall hear that will he speak, and he will tell you the things to come. He will glorify me; because he will receive of mine, and will tell it to you."

This language is perfectly transparent. The promised Spirit was to recall and reveal Christian truth to the minds of the apostles. Hence he is called in this discourse, and nowhere else in the

Bible, "the Spirit of the truth;" that is, the Spirit who should reveal to the apostles the whole truth in respect to Christ and the way of life through him. A work more sublime, more far-reaching, more essential to the purity and power of the new religion, than this cannot be imagined. For the inspiration of the apostles not only made their teaching what it was, clear, spiritual, divine, to men of their own time, but it made the New Testament also what it is, a source of perfect truth and unspeakable good to men of all times.

WAITING FOR INSPIRATION.

The command which Christ gave his apostles, to tarry in Jerusalem, without entering on their appointed work, until they had received the promised Spirit, shows that inspiration was to be imparted by that Spirit. Luke informs us that Christ, before his ascension, reminded the eleven, with others, that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem;" adding, however, "Behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you. But tarry ye in the city

until ye are endued with power from on high." In another place he says that their risen Lord "commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which ye heard from me; for John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Now, it is plain from the four Gospels that the twelve had very incorrect views of their Master's work and kingdom, until after his resurrection from the dead, and, indeed, until the day of Pentecost (see Acts i. 6, 7). Not one of them appears to have understood the words of the Baptist: "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." And the explanation of this must be found in the circumstance that he was a prophet inspired of God, while they were not yet inspired. They needed, it is true, more faith and love; but they needed especially, as wise master-builders in the kingdom of Christ, a thorough and exact knowledge of their Lord's will; and this knowledge could only be imparted by the Spirit. This was a gift which in its highest form could be imparted by inspiration alone; and it was thus

imparted from the day of Pentecost onward to the death of the last apostle. Let this be denied, and alas for our confidence in the Bible as a standard of appeal in respect to Christian doctrine or duty! But it cannot be denied by one who fairly weighs the evidence. The gifts of the Spirit were bestowed on the primitive Christians "to profit withal," and in general not so much for the benefit of the recipients as for the good of the entire brotherhood. This is taught in the twelfth and fourteenth chapters of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. Hence for the apostles as the authoritative teachers of the gospel no gift was so important as that of inspiration or prophecy. To them, because through them to others during the whole history of the Church, it was the great pentecostal gift, qualifying them as no other could for their special ministry. It is not too much, then, to say that the apostles were required to wait for the baptism of the Spirit because they must have the gift of inspiration to fit them for their work.

LUKE'S ACCOUNT OF PENTECOST.

The account which Luke furnishes of the miracle on the day of Pentecost shows that "baptism in the Spirit" included the gift of inspiration. It is reported by him that "a sound out of heaven as of a rushing, mighty wind, filled the whole house where they were sitting," and this sound might betoken in a general way the coming of the Spirit; but it is also said that "there appeared tongues as of fire, distributed among them," and these tongues could only symbolize a supernatural utterance of truth from God. This interpretation is established by the words which follow: "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." Moveover, it appears that the subject of their communication was "the wonderful works of God." This description must lead every candid reader to suppose that a chief part of the miracle consisted in imparting to the apostles new views of the Lord's work, together with a mysterious power of using languages which they had never learned.

"That Luke designed to state here that the disciples were suddenly endued with the power of speaking foreign languages, unknown to them before, would seem to be too manifest to admit of any doubt" (*Hackett*). Paul declares it is true that "tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not" (1 Cor. xiv. 22); and, from his account of what they were in the churches at the later period when he wrote, it is plain that their principal office was to attest the truth of the gospel to persons without; but it is no less evident from the narrative of Luke that the highest form of this gift on the day of Pentecost was also a means of declaring the truth to strangers from many nations, and a sign that the gospel should be preached to every creature. It appears, therefore, that this miraculous endowment was an important part of the baptism of the Spirit.

PETER'S EXPLANATION.

Peter's explanation of the wonders of that day shows no less clearly that the inspiration of the apostles was included in the baptism of the

Spirit. He pronounces these wonders a fulfilment of the words of Joel by which God promised to pour out his Spirit upon all flesh; and he mentions prophecy not once, but twice, as the chief result of that outpouring. Now, the gift of prophecy was miraculous, making him who possessed it the mouthpiece of God for the time. For in the New Testament, as well as in the Old, a prophet is always one who speaks the will of God without error. His message is God's message. Yet Dr. Mahan, apparently influenced by one doubtful passage (1 Cor. xiv. 24), says, "The prophetic power is in all such passages, and in other Scriptures, represented as the common privilege of all believers." This is a surprising statement, and the writer can only explain it by supposing that Dr. Mahan neglected to verify it by actual examination. If there is any thing manifest throughout the Bible, it is that prophecy was a special gift, limited in ordinary circumstances to a very few persons, and never the privilege of all. In the earlier years of the apostolic age there were, however, for obvious reasons, great numbers who were occa-

sionally visited by the Spirit of prophecy. Of these reasons the most important may have been the lack of inspired writings to explain the way of life through Christ, and apply the doctrines of the gospel to the various questions and emergencies of that new way. But the fact is patent, whatever may have been the reasons for it, that for a considerable time very many in the churches had the gift of prophecy, so that they spoke the truth with divine authority, even "as the Spirit gave them utterance." And this, if we are guided by Peter's interpretation of the Pentecostal miracle, was an effect of "baptism in the Spirit."

SIMILAR GIFTS.

The account of similar gifts afterward bestowed shows that inspiration, or miraculous influence of some other kind, was included in the baptism of the Spirit. Three instances merit particular notice. The first is that of Cornelius and his kindred. For the record declares, that, while Peter was preaching Christ to them, the Holy Ghost fell upon them, and they of the cir-

cumcision were astonished "because they heard them speaking with tongues, and magnifying God." In reporting this miracle to the believing Jews in Jerusalem, Peter said, "When I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell upon them as also upon us in the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Ghost." In this case, then, baptism in the Holy Spirit included miraculous gifts.

The second instance is that of certain disciples whom Paul found in Ephesus, and rebaptized. "And Paul, having laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied." This case is just as clear as the preceding. But it must not be passed without noting the use which Dr. Mahan makes of the question (Acts xix. 2): "Have ye received the Holy Ghost *since* ye believed?" For, emphasizing the word "*since*," he infers from this question that the entrance of Christians on "the higher life," by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, was some time *after* their conversion, and was an almost universal experi-

ence. But according to the versions of the Bible Union, Alford, Noyes, Hackett, and indeed of all competent interpreters, the question should be translated, "Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?" Is it possible that President Mahan neglected to consult his Greek Testament on this passage?

The third instance is that of the Samaritan converts. They had believed in Christ, as preached by Philip, and had been baptized. Simon the sorcerer also professed to believe, and was baptized; and, continuing with Philip, he wondered at the miracles and signs which were wrought. Then Peter and John came down to Samaria, prayed for the baptized disciples that they might receive the Holy Spirit, and, laying their hands upon them, the desired gift came. That it was followed and manifested by speaking with tongues, or some other miraculous activity, is to be concluded from the attempt of Simon to purchase the power of communicating the same gift.

Two remarks may be added: First, in the baptism of the Holy Ghost, extraordinary powers

were bestowed in *addition to* the ordinary sanctifying work of the Spirit. These powers were conferred upon none but true believers in the apostolic age; hence the confidence of Peter in the conversion of Cornelius, and in his full acceptance by the Lord. And, second, immersion in the Holy Spirit, regarded as a figurative expression, could only be applied to the largest measure of the Spirit's influence; and therefore if there were special and visible effects in any instances, superadded to his sanctifying work in the heart, these instances would naturally be distinguished from others, and called baptisms in the Spirit.

The writer has now attempted to answer from the Word of God four important questions: namely, 1, Do the Scriptures separate Christians into two classes, or grades, as is done by the doctrine of "the higher life"? 2, Do they speak of a "renewal" of Christians, subsequent and analogous to their regeneration, as taught by the doctrine of "the higher life"? 3, Do they speak of certain Christians as being "sealed" by the Spirit after their regeneration, as this is taught

by the doctrine of "the higher life"? 4, Do they speak of "baptism in the Holy Spirit," after regeneration, as something to be expected by all Christians to the end of time? All these questions have been answered in the negative. It has been shown that the "baptism of the Holy Ghost," predicted by Joel and John the Baptist, but promised and conferred by Christ himself, imparted miraculous gifts to its subjects, and among these the gift of prophecy, which rendered its possessor an ultimate authority in respect to the doctrines taught by him. It was also remarked that most of these gifts were not bestowed for the special good of the recipient, but for the benefit of the whole Christian body, which was then small and weak, imperfectly trained, and without inspired documents teaching the new faith.

It may now be added that Paul recognizes the operation of the Holy Spirit, by which faith, hope, and love are produced in the heart, as the greatest personal blessing enjoyed by the servants of Christ, inasmuch as it is the source of those graces which are necessary to all Chris-

tians in all ages, world without end (1 Cor. xiii.). It may also be remarked that none of those Christians, or Christian bodies, that have claimed the gift of miracles, of tongues, of prophecy, or of infallibility, have added any valuable truth to the doctrines revealed in the New Testament, or have proved themselves through any long period of time better workers for the Master than others who disclaim the possession of such gifts. The early Montanists, the popes and saints of the middle ages, the followers of Edward Irving, and many others perhaps, will occur to the reader as illustrating the truth of this remark. If, however, it should be said by those who profess to enjoy "the higher life," that they do not lay claim to miraculous powers of any kind, and therefore ought not to be classed with the parties just named, it must be responded, that, while saying this, they should not profess to have been "baptized in the Holy Ghost," nor apply to themselves those texts which refer to this baptism. But, if they give up their appeal to these passages, there will be none left with which to establish the doctrine of a sudden "renewal"

of Christians after the time of their regeneration.

It must be remarked, still further, that there are in the New Testament some indications of a gradual decrease of "the gifts" of the Spirit in the apostolic age. This appears from a comparison of the qualifications which were prescribed by the apostles for the seven deacons (see Acts vi. 3–8), with those required at a much later period for bishops and deacons (1 Tim. iii.; Tit. i.). The latter passages are indeed surprisingly inconsistent with the doctrine of "the higher life." For, if this doctrine be true, the possession of "the higher life" would seem to be the first and most indispensable qualification for office in the Church; but none of the expressions which are supposed to denote this life are used by the apostle in describing the persons who were fit to be made pastors or deacons. This omission is perfectly explained by supposing that "baptism in the Holy Ghost" conferred miraculous powers, as that of speaking with tongues, of prophesying, of healing the sick, and that these extraordinary gifts, having served

their purpose, were now for the most part withdrawn from the Church; but on no other hypothesis can it be readily accounted for. It is therefore safe to assume that the most conspicuous spiritual gifts had begun to decrease, while such qualities as faith, experience, wisdom, aptness to teach, sobriety, hospitality, and the like, were set in the foreground.

OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

But there are objections to the view which has now been given of "baptism in the Holy Ghost;" and the reader's attention may properly be directed to one or two of them. The *first* is drawn from a remarkable passage in the Gospel of John (vii. 37–39): "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as said the Scriptures, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. And this he spoke concerning the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet [given] because Jesus was not yet glorified." These

verses are supposed to teach, by implication if not directly, that "baptism in the Holy Spirit" is assured to all Christians upon the exercise of suitable faith. But it should be observed that the words of Christ are a prediction of what *will* be, not of what *may* be. They assert that rivers of living water will flow from the inner being, or heart, of him who believes in Jesus, and, indeed, of every one who believes in him. Nothing is said of peculiar faith, or of faith in any particular promise: belief in Christ is the only condition named or suggested. The soul of the believer is to be a fountain of spiritual life, springing up and overflowing in streams of blessing to the world. The sacred writer goes on to say that the promise of Christ referred to the work of the Spirit which was to be accomplished in the hearts of believers after the glorification of the Lord. This explanation shows that the spiritual life, joy, and influence of believers were to be greatly increased by the more powerful working of the Holy Ghost after the ascension of Christ. And this was certainly true from the day of Pentecost onward. But if

it was true of all Christians, or of Christians generally, — the work of the Spirit rising in power and blessedness with the increase of knowledge among believers, — there is no foundation in this passage for a division of the faithful, since the time of Christ, into two classes, according to the theory of "the higher life." And if it was not true of all Christians, as compared with godly men before the day of Pentecost, then it may be referred most naturally to such as received extraordinary gifts to qualify them for extraordinary duties in the apostolic age. Though the writer is ready to accept the former explanation, he believes the latter to be far more reasonable than the view maintained by the advocates of the doctrine of "the higher life." Indeed, the latter interpretation brings the passage into line with all those which speak distinctly of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and therefore has much in its favor. But the former interpretation is not inconsistent with any thing said respecting "baptism in the Spirit," while it agrees with the apparently universal application of the Lord's promise.

And according to this view the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers, producing love, joy, peace, and the other Christian graces, is more powerful and fruitful since the exaltation of Christ than it was before. The same is true of his work in bestowing special gifts, though the latter were limited to a part of believers in the first age of the Church. Hence the passage in question furnishes no real basis for the doctrine of two distinct grades of Christian life.

A *second* objection to the view which has been taken of "baptism in the Holy Ghost" is drawn from certain expressions in the wonderful discourse of Christ with his disciples during the evening before his agony. For he spoke of the Father as about to give them another Comforter, who should "abide with them forever," and of the Comforter as about to "convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment" (John xiv. 16, xvi. 8). Both these expressions seem to look beyond the eleven; the former to those who should believe through their word, and the latter to persons who should have their

consciences enlightened through the Spirit's work. But, while this is freely admitted, it does not follow that the Holy Spirit was to do the same thing for all believers in the first age. "Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Do all speak with tongues?" "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." The twelfth and fourteenth chapters of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians afford conclusive evidence of the fact that the Comforter may abide with saints to the end of time, and yet none but those of the first age be "baptized in the Spirit," and thus endowed with extraordinary gifts in addition to ordinary grace. The gift of prophecy or inspiration was certainly needed by the apostles, and perhaps by others in the primitive Church; but when the whole substance of Christian truth had been put in writing, and placed in the hands of believers scattered over the Roman world, it is not easy to see what further purpose could be served by perpetuating that gift. And the same may be said of other miraculous gifts. Plainly, then, the work of the Spirit, by which extraordinary powers were conferred on some members

of the early churches, might cease with the apostolic age, while the work of the same Spirit in other forms adapted to the needs of the saints might continue until the second coming of Christ. Hence the expressions quoted from the last discourse of Christ do not amount to an objection against the view which has been taken in this discussion of "baptism in the Spirit." But if that view remains unshaken, no argument can be drawn from passages which refer to that baptism, in support of the doctrine that Christians are divisible into two classes, one of them composed of simple believers who have been justified through faith, and the other composed of "renewed" believers who have been sanctified through faith.

Here our examination of the first distinctive point in the doctrine of "the higher life" may be closed; for it has been shown that the Scriptures do not agree with the doctrine in question at that point by recognizing the two grades of Christian life which are asserted by it.

DEGREE OF SANCTIFICATION CLAIMED.

THE *second feature* of this doctrine which merits close examination is the estimate which it puts on the moral state of those who enjoy "the higher life." For whether this state is described as "the rest of faith," "perfect trust," "assurance of present salvation," "perfect love," "evangelical holiness," "Christian perfection," "entire sanctification," "Christian purity," or "freedom from sin," something more appears to be claimed by those who use one, or all, of these expressions in explaining their own state, than either the Word of God or the history of the Christian religion authorizes them to claim. It is believed, that owing to incorrect views of sin, or of the divine method of sanctification, they imagine themselves to have reached a higher degree of inward purity than they have really attained. If their views of sin and of the

divine method of grace are plainly scriptural, the interpretation which they put upon their own spiritual state may be correct; but if they misunderstand the teaching of God's Word in respect to the holiness possessed by Christians in this life, there is no reason to suppose that the interpretation which they give of their own experience is right. In other words, every type or form of religious experience must be tested by the Sacred Oracles; not by single expressions, laid hold of and emphasized without regard to others which may modify or explain their sense, but by the whole teaching of the Scriptures in respect to such experience.

No man who accepts the Bible as true can doubt that, in the sense intended by the Saviour and his apostles, Christ "will draw all men" to himself, and "in the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of those in heaven, and those on earth, and those under the earth;" but it would be easy for one studying these expressions, apart from others that modify or explain them, to draw from them a doctrine inconsistent with other portions of the Bible, namely, the doctrine of

universal salvation. So likewise every man who receives the Scriptures as true must believe that, in the sense intended by the sacred writers, "Enoch walked with God," and "pleased God," that Noah, Job, David, and many other ancient saints, as well as Paul and many of the primitive Christians, were "perfect;" and that all believers in Jesus are "sanctified" and "holy;" but it would be easy for any one looking at these expressions by themselves, and disregarding the light which others cast upon them, to attribute to the good men referred to a degree of moral purity and excellence which they did not possess.

Once more, it is certain that the words of the sacred writer in Heb. iv. 3 — "For we that have believed do enter into the rest" promised of old to the people of God — are true in the sense intended by him; but whether they refer to a state fully realized in the present life, or to a state partially realized here and completely hereafter, or to a "rest that remaineth to the people of God" in heaven, is to be ascertained not by an appeal to Christian experience, but by a careful study of the whole context, if not of the

whole Bible. The Christian may, indeed, justly appeal to experience in proof of his enjoying a certain rest of soul in this life; but, whether it is the whole or even a part of that rest which is spoken of in the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, can only be learned from the passage itself properly interpreted. The friends of the doctrine now in question will agree with the writer in what has been said on this point, and must therefore naturally expect their fellow-Christians to rely upon the testimony of Scripture, as to the moral state of saints on earth, rather than upon the testimony of those who profess to enjoy "the rest of faith."

DESCRIPTION OF THE HIGHER LIFE.

But what is "the higher life" as explained by those who profess to know it by experience? What is the degree of sanctification, purity, or love, which constitutes it? "Many who profess to have attained it," says a Presbyterian, Rev. A. C. Jenkin, D.D., "affirm that in consequence of their abiding in Christ by faith, and a realization and consciousness of his dwelling in them

by his Spirit, they possess the assurance of a present salvation; and thus resting in Jesus day by day, and moment by moment, they are delivered from sin and freed from anxious cares and burdens, and enjoy a sweet, uninterrupted sense of God's favor and communion." Speaking for Presbyterians he says, "Its advocates and confessors do not say they are sinless; they disclaim any goodness or righteousness in themselves. They attribute all to Christ; he makes and keeps them whole. . . . The soul finds in him all that it needs. . . . It is complete in him. It puts on Christ, and then it rests, trusting in him to do his own work, that of *saving to the uttermost;* and while thus trusting it is saved. . . . As certainly as he cast out devils and healed the leprous, so certainly he can cast out evil tempers, and make us every whit whole, according as we trust in him from day to day."

Another writer, Judge T. O. Lowe, says, "Very many of those dear saints of God testified that, through the overcoming power of the living Christ within, they were delivered from all save an occasional sense of condemnation, and had

found in him relief from a life made up of conscious sinning and repenting." Still another, R. P. Smith, remarks, "We cannot claim any perfection beyond this, that up to the furthest line of to-day's consciousness we have the witness that we do love God and our brethren, and keep a conscience void of offence. . . . It is not perfect knowledge, perfect wisdom, or perfect attainment, but simply a perfect heart — that is, a heart yielding without reserve to God — to walk in entire obedience and perfect trust."

Another, Rev. Asa Mahan, D.D., declares that, if we are in the "higher life," "we shall serve God without fear, in righteousness and true holiness, all the days of our lives." The same writer admits, "On a very few questions in moral philosophy and theology, Brother Finney and myself have arrived at opposite conclusions;" but adds, "We differ just where minds under the influence of the purest integrity and the highest form of divine illumination (!) are liable to differ." The modesty of this language is not conspicuous.

In answer to the question, "Whom, then, do you mean by one that is perfect?" Mr. Wesley

says, "We mean one in whom is 'the mind which was in Christ,' and who so 'walketh as Christ also walked,' . . . one in whom is 'no occasion of stumbling.' and who, accordingly, 'doth not commit sin.' . . . He is 'holy as God who called him is holy,' both in heart and in all manner of conversation." And in reply to the question, "When may a person judge himself to have attained this?" he says, "When, after having been fully convinced of inbred sin, by a far deeper and clearer conviction than that he experienced before justification, and after having experienced a gradual mortification of it, he experienced a total death to sin, and an entire witness of the renewal: I judge it as impossible this man should be deceived herein as that God should lie."

Another Methodist, Rev. R. S. Foster, D.D., defines the life in question thus: "We believe it a Christian's privilege to attain to a state in which he will be *entirely free from sin*, properly so called, both inward and outward; a state in which he will do no act involving guilt, in which he will possess no unholy temper, in which the

entire outward man of the life, and the entire inward man of the heart, will be pure in the sight of God." He also says of "entire holiness," as possessed by some in this life, "We believe it to include, in the second place, the spiritual graces, as love, meekness, humility, and such like, in perfection, — perfection, not of measure, but of kind. . . . These graces exist in the entirely sanctified soul without alloy, without mixture, . . . and in measure corresponding to the present capacity of the soul possessing them."

These extracts set forth with sufficient clearness the degree of moral purity which is claimed by many if not by all of those who profess to enjoy "the higher life." Such as use the most guarded language assert that they have "a serenity of conscience only rarely and at lengthening intervals disturbed," and that this serenity of conscience is the result of being "saved from *conscious* transgression." One of these objects to the "doctrine" of Methodists on this subject, while he indorses their "experience." He thinks they lower the standard of holiness prescribed

by the law of God, until it agrees with their own experience; and therefore claim to be saved from *all* sins, when they should only claim to be saved from *conscious* transgression.

The criticism of this writer seems to be just, so far as it goes, but it stops short of the whole truth; for the requirements of the divine law are so comprehensive and spiritual that no man can test his inward life by that law, without perceiving that he is a transgressor. If he fails to meet the exact, the utmost demands of that law, as set before him in the Scriptures, he is not saved from conscious transgression. When, for example, he is commanded to be holy, because God is holy, the standard is one of absolute moral perfection; and, measuring himself and others by it, he will see that the words of Christ are profoundly true, "There is none good but one, that is, God;" as if Christ had said to the young ruler, "By comparing yourself with any man, however upright and devout, you compare yourself with one who is morally imperfect, with a sinner; while the only true standard of right character for man is the holy character of God." The same result

will be reached, if he tests himself by the two great commands of the law: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind;" and, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." For, what is it to love God with all the heart, and soul, and mind? It is to love him as purely and intensely and constantly as a being of the same capacity, but without the least taint of evil in the heart to weaken, cloud, or interrupt the ardors of holy affection, could love him. It is to love him with the whole force of the soul, undiminished by the least remnant of selfishness. For moral weakness does not reduce moral obligation. If it did, Satan would be under almost infinitely less obligation to love God than Gabriel, and, the farther any being advanced in sin, the less of service would be due from him to his Maker. The law, as a standard of right and duty, has not been modified by the work of Christ: it has rather been honored and sustained. The theory of one law for angels, another for Adam before the fall, and still another for believers in Christ, is without any foundation in the Word of God. It is

impossible to doubt that the law for all moral beings, in all worlds, is one and the same. To love God with all the spiritual ardor and energy of their undivided being is their simple duty.

If the lessons of history may be trusted, the doctrine and experience of "the higher life," as it is called, have a strong tendency to merge themselves in the doctrine and experience of "sinless perfection." And at the present time many distinguished advocates of the former are equally positive in their belief of the latter. An attempt must therefore be made to answer the question, Do any Christians live without sin in this world? All are commanded to do so by an authority inseparable from their moral being, by the voice of conscience in their souls. This voice forbids every feeling, purpose, and act that is wrong, and enjoins perfect and perpetual rectitude in heart, as well as in life. No less clearly does the law of God, as set forth in the Bible, require of all a life without sin; for it commands them to be perfect or holy, while it brings forward the character of God as the standard of holiness. But do the sacred writers teach us

that any or all believers in Christ obey the law of God completely in this life, so that they are free from transgression as well as from condemnation?

SCRIPTURAL PROOFS EXAMINED.

SIXTH OF ROMANS.

THE question at the close of the previous section may be answered in the affirmative as to all Christians, if certain expressions of the New Testament are understood in the broadest and highest sense, without regard to other expressions which qualify and explain them. Thus, in the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, Paul says, "Our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, in order that we should no longer be in bondage to sin. . . . Reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ. . . . . Being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness." Do not these expressions teach that the primitive disciples lived without sin? They were told to remember that their "old man was crucified," and urged to "account themselves dead to sin," and "made free from sin," but "alive to God," and "servants of righteousness."

True: but this language was addressed "to all the beloved of God in Rome;" and therefore, if it teaches that any of them were living without sin, it teaches that all of them were living thus, — a perfect church, holy as Christ was holy, in thought, and word, and deed. But why, then, was this sixth chapter written? Why ask of such saints, "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" "Shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace?" Why say, "I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh"? Why exhort them, "Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof"? There is no evidence in this chapter, rightly interpreted, that any Christian in Rome was living without sin, though there is evidence that all Christians were living without condemnation, having entered upon a new life in which the love of God and of righteousness were expected to bear rule.

EIGHTH OF ROMANS.

Passing now to the eighth chapter of the same epistle, we find these words: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free" — at the time of my regeneration — "from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit." This language, taken by itself, might be understood to affirm that Paul, and others in whom "the law of the Spirit of life" was operative, were made free from all sin in feeling and conduct, being led by the Spirit to fulfil the requirements of the law of holy living. But a careful examination of the whole chapter will convince any one that this is not the apostle's meaning. For he is not speaking, in this chapter, of a particular class of Christians, but, rather, of the state of all true Christians. Hence he says in this connection, "Ye are not

in the flesh, but in the Spirit; if, indeed, the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." But may not this indwelling of the Spirit, by which Christians were proved to be in the Spirit, have been limited to a certain number of the saints who were enjoying "the higher life"? By no means; for the apostle adds in the same verse, "If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Every person, therefore, who truly belongs to Christ by regeneration, has the Spirit of God in his soul; and one aspect of his experience is described by the eighth of Romans. The next verse strongly confirms this view: "And if Christ is in you" — by his Spirit — "the body indeed is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness;" a statement in perfect harmony with the last verse of the seventh chapter, "So, then, I myself with the mind serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin." For Paul does not say, "the body is *mortal* because of sin," but rather it is *dead*, since the old and sinful nature still exists in the man whose heart has been renewed and made the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost.

Hence there is evermore reason for believers in Christ to "mortify the deeds of the body," that is, to slay the deeds of their sinful nature; and in proportion as they do this, under the leadership of the Divine Spirit, will they truly live. Accordingly the object of Paul, in the eighth chapter of this epistle, is to show that the Christian is not left to contend with his evil nature by the simple force of holy purpose in his renewed heart, but that he is assured of victory by the presence and power of the Spirit of Christ. Left to himself he would be no match for the strength of sin in his old nature; but by union with Christ he is not only set free from condemnation, but also strengthened with might by the Spirit, and set forward every day on the way to complete victory over sin. But these three circumstances, that Paul represents all Christians as being in the Spirit; that he affirms their body, or old nature, to be still "dead," or unrenewed, unquickened, though the spirit has been made alive; and that he assumes the necessity on their part of mortifying the deeds of the body, — prove that he did not look upon any Christians as living without sin.

OTHER STRONG EXPRESSIONS.

Similar expressions may be found in the letters of Paul to the Corinthians. In his first letter he addresses the members of "the Church of God which is in Corinth," as "sanctified in Christ Jesus, called, holy;" and in the sixth chapter, after speaking of fornicators, idolaters, thieves, drunkards, and the like, he adds these words: "And such were some of you; but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." It would, however, be a strange kind of interpretation that would find in these words evidence that any or all of the Corinthian Christians had at any time lived without sin; for the whole aim of the epistle is to correct errors, restore harmony, and advance purity in the Church. Just as little, therefore, can the striking words of the second epistle, "If any one is in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things have become new," prove that all persons are made perfectly holy by regeneration. A holy principle is cer-

tainly implanted in their souls, but much of evil still remains. The change is great, and there is nothing which it does not affect; yet the sinful nature still exists, though it is felt to be a grief and a burden, a foe and a snare.

FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

But Paul is not alone in his use of language which needs to be taken in a qualified sense. John resembles him greatly in this respect, as will be seen by a glance at his first epistle. He says of Christ, that "he was manifested that he might take away sins; and in him is no sin. Every one that abideth in him sinneth not; whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. He that committeth sin is of the devil. Whosoever hath been begotten of God doth not commit sin; because his seed abideth in him; and he cannot sin because he hath been begotten of God." In another passage he writes, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things."

Now, these expressions seem to teach, not that some, but that all Christians live without sin, that

the holy seed implanted in their hearts makes it impossible for them to commit sin, and that the anointing of the Holy One secures to them a knowledge of all Christian truth. But such an interpretation of his words makes John contradict himself again and again in the same letter, and supposes him to be blind to the actions of those who bore the name of Christ. His language must therefore be supposed to set forth the character and working of the new disposition originated by the Holy Spirit, or else to describe the normal and ideal life of the renewed soul. In the former case it is explained by a remark in the fifth chapter, "His commandments are not grievous; because all that is begotten of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, our faith." In other words, whatever may be in the Christian's nature, the new principle of faith, begotten of God by the Spirit, is holy and victorious, giving character to the man as a servant of Christ. The language of John, thus explained, reminds one of the distinction which Paul makes, in the seventh of Romans and elsewhere, between his "inner

man," or true self, and his "old man," or "body of sin."

Slightly different is the view of Alford: "The plain words of the apostle must be held fast, and explained by the analogy of his way of speaking throughout the epistle of the ideal reality of the life of God and the life of sin as absolutely excluding one another. . . . If the child of God falls into sin, it is an act against nature, deadly to life, hardly endured, and bringing bitter repentance." This is the second interpretation named above. Should both of these be rejected as unsatisfactory, it will nevertheless be necessary to concede with all interpreters that John does not intend to affirm the actual sinlessness of all Christians, much less the impossibility of their committing sin; for such an affirmation would be wholly inconsistent with his own language in chapters first and second, viz., "If we" who are Christians "say that we have not sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and," by so doing, "cleanse us from all unrighteousness." . . .

"My little children, these things I write unto you that ye may not sin. And if any one have sinned," that is, shall have sinned, "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." After using such language as this, it is preposterous to suppose that John would represent any or all believers as living without sin.

It has now been shown that some of the strongest affirmations of the holiness of Christians in the New Testament apply to all believers, but do not, properly interpreted, affirm their lives to be free from sin.

STILL OTHER PASSAGES.

But with these affirmations are often coupled a few passages which are thought to imply the fact that entire freedom from sin may be reached at almost any point of time in a Christian's earthly life, or at least long before its close.

In some of these is the command to be perfect or holy, thus: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect;" and, "As he that called you is holy, be ye also

holy in all conduct; because it is written, Ye shall be holy because I am holy;" together with the exhortation of Paul, "Be ye therefore imitators of God, as children beloved." Of what use are precepts and exhortations, it is asked, if Christians are never to comply with them? The law was given to Christians to be obeyed, and it is surely safe to conclude that it can and will be obeyed by some in this life.

To this it must be answered that it is manifestly unsafe to infer the moral perfection of even a few Christians from the circumstance that all are commanded or exhorted to be perfect. It would be quite as logical to assume that all Christians obey the law completely from the hour of their conversion, as to assume that some obey it thus for a month or a year. But the premise warrants neither conclusion. If a moral law be given by the Most High, it must naturally be a perfect rule of right, whether it be kept by many or by none. Nor can it be pronounced useless, though it be kept by none. It may be of great service because it reveals the right, or what Christians ought to be and to do, and

because it shows to those who are saved by Christ the degree of sin still in their hearts and lives, together with the wondrous grace of God to his wayward children.

In other passages we are told that God desires the sanctification of believers. Thus Paul writes to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. iv. 3), "This is the will of God, your sanctification;" and it is agreed that God will impart to his children what he wishes them to have. It is even suggested, that, if none of them are sanctified fully before the hour of death, it must be because God is either unable or unwilling thus to sanctify them. But are we not assured by the same apostle that it is the will of God that "all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. ii. 4)? And would it not be hasty reasoning to conclude from this language that all men will be saved? Besides, it may be truly said, that God wishes not only that some Christians, but that *all* Christians, and indeed all moral beings in the universe, should be wholly free from sin, from this instant onward through eternal ages; nay, that he has always wished this in

respect to all such beings; but we do not therefore conclude that there will be no more sin, or that there never has been sin. Moreover, it should be observed that the sanctification specially referred to by Paul in his letter to the Thessalonians is somewhat restricted by the context; for it consists, *first*, in refraining from fornication and adultery, and, *secondly*, in entering the marriage state with a pure and honorable mind, not in the passion of desire. Hence the passage sets forth what Christians ought to do in obedience to the will of God, not what he proposes to do in their hearts. Yet in doing this they have the gift and aid of his Holy Spirit.

In still other passages, apostolic prayer for the entire sanctification of believers is appealed to as implying the fact of complete freedom from sin in certain instances. Thus in 1 Thess. v. 23: "But may the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly (or throughout); and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved whole without blame in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." This last clause is very important, as is likewise the next sentence: "Faithful is he that calleth you,

who also will do it." This is Ellicott's translation ; and with it may be compared his rendering of 1 Thess. iii. 12, 13 : "But you may the Lord make to increase and abound in your love one towards another and towards all [men], even as we also [do] towards you ; to the end he may stablish your hearts unblamable in holiness in the presence of God and our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all his saints." See also 1 Cor, i. 7–9: "So that ye are behind in no gift, waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ ; who will also confirm you unto the end blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is God, by whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." (Cf. Jude 24.) It seems to be evident that the entire sanctification, or the sanctification of the whole man, spoken of in these and other passages of like purport, is to be found accomplished at the coming of Christ ; but neither of the passages proves more than this. They do not seem to imply that this work will be done before the hour of death, so that men will live for a time without any sin in this world.

Besides, if the mere circumstance that the apostles prayed for the entire sanctification of believers proves that some of them will be thus sanctified in this life, why does it not prove that all of them will have the same blessing? In his letter to the Thessalonians Paul says, "May the God of peace himself sanctify you throughout." *You*, not *some* of you; the whole of the Church, not a part of it. And he adds, "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." His prayer was that God would sanctify them wholly; and that prayer he was certain the Lord would answer — doubtless because he knew it was God's plan and purpose to keep his own, and render them perfect before the day of Christ.

PAUL AND JOHN.

PAUL'S EXPERIENCE.

IN reply to the question, Do any Christians live without sin in the present state? reference has been made to several expressions of the New Testament which seem at first sight to affirm this. But they affirm it, if at all, not of a particular grade of believers in Christ, but of all without distinction who are his. And this circumstance proves that they were never meant to be taken in their full sense as descriptive of the actual life of Christians yet in the flesh. For, thus interpreted, they would contradict the manifest purpose of the writings in which they are found, as well as the experience of good men in every age of the Church. It will be recollected that the expressions referred to occur in the letters of Paul and of John; and if these apostles, when speaking of Christians in general,

sometimes used language which taken by itself could be misunderstood, they may perhaps have done the same thing when speaking of themselves. And, as those who profess to enjoy "the higher life" believe that these two apostles had experience of the same life through grace, it is necessary to look at their statements concerning the work of God in them.

A beginning may be made with what Paul has said of his life before God was pleased to call him by his grace, and reveal his Son in him; for this examination will be of service in showing his style, or use of language. In his defence before Agrippa he asserts that he once thought it his *duty* to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus, and that in pursuance of this conviction he "shut up many of the saints in prisons," and "when they were put to death gave his voice against them;" also that he "constrained some of them to blaspheme," and "being exceedingly mad against them persecuted them also unto foreign cities" (Acts xxvi. 9–11). Now, can it reasonably be supposed that he had no risings of doubt as to the guilt of those

whom he so furiously persecuted, and as to his own duty in thus proceeding against them? Did he mean to affirm any thing more than his general, though blind and passionate sense of duty in this terrible work? And when he afterward said that he was a "blasphemer and a persecutor," and had obtained mercy because of his ignorance and unbelief; when he called himself "chief of sinners," and declared that for this cause he obtained mercy, that in him "first Christ Jesus might show forth all his long suffering" (1 Tim. i. 13, *seq.*), — did he not intend to charge himself with real and great guilt?

Again, in his letter to the Philippians the same apostle describes himself in these words: "As to the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." But does he mean to say that he had fully obeyed the law of God, so that it could lay no sin to his charge? If so, why does he write to the Galatians, that "as many as are of works of law are under a curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all the things written in the book of the law to do them"? or to the Romans, "Both Jews and

Gentiles are all under sin," and, "Whatever the law saith, it saith to those under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God"? In the light of these passages it can hardly be supposed that Paul meant to claim for himself any thing more than great strictness in observing the requirements of the law as to external service, a strictness which rendered him "blameless" in the eyes of men.

In a similar way ought his language to be interpreted, when he speaks of his life and work as an apostle. Thus in his second Epistle to the Corinthians (i. 12) he says, "Our glorying is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom, but in the grace of God, did we conduct ourselves in the world, and more abundantly toward you;" and in the first Epistle to the Thessalonians, "Ye are witnesses, and God, how holily and justly and unblamably we behaved ourselves to you that believe" (ii. 10). These are certainly strong expressions; but considered in connection with the context, and

with the apostle's use of the words "holy" and "blameless" in other places, they by no means teach that he supposed himself to have lived in Corinth or Thessalonica without sin. It is characteristic of this apostle to use intense, unqualified language when treating of any particular subject, leaving the necessary limitations or qualifications to be supplied by the reader, or stated in some other place.

But are there any expressions in the writings of Paul which show that he did not regard himself as perfect in heart and life? In his letters to the Corinthians this great apostle was compelled to assert with decision his apostolic authority and faithfulness; yet he says, "So let a man account us, as ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you, or by man's day; nay, neither do I judge myself. For I am conscious to myself of nothing; yet am I not hereby justified, but he that judges me is the Lord. So then judge not any thing before the

time until the Lord come," &c. (1 Cor. iv. 1–5). How does this language of Paul compare with the words of some among us who claim to be living without sin? For the apostle distinctly admits, that, though he is not conscious of unfaithfulness in the discharge of his duties as an apostle in Corinth, his conscience is imperfect and untrustworthy on this point. The Lord, and the Lord only, can make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and when he comes each one shall have the praise due to him from God.

Very suggestive also are his words in the ninth chapter: "I therefore so run, as not uncertainly; so fight I, as not beating the air; but I beat down my body, and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps, when I have been a herald to others, I should myself be rejected." Here the body, as in Col. ii. 11, is equivalent to "the old man" or "the flesh of sin;" and the passage may be compared with Rom. viii. 13: "If ye live according to the flesh, ye shall die; but if by the Spirit ye slay the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live." Meyer's note hits the mark: "Paul regards his own body (thus explained) *as the*

antagonist, which he assails with energetic and effective force, — even as a pugilist beats the face of his opponent black and blue, — in order that the affections which are hostile to the spiritual *ego* may be subdued."

But the view which Paul entertained of his own moral state is expressed still more clearly in his Epistle to the Philippians (iii. 12–15) thus: "Not that I have already obtained" the full experimental knowledge just described, "or have already been made perfect; but I pursue onward, if I may lay hold of that for which I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not count myself to have laid hold of it; but one thing I do: forgetting the things behind, and reaching forth to the things before, I pursue on toward the mark, for the prize of the heavenly calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be of this mind." The perfection which the apostle disclaims in the first of these verses is ethical or moral. He declares himself to be in this respect striving to reach a goal and obtain a prize still before him. This is the interpreta-

tion of Hackett, Alford, Ellicott, Lightfoot, Meyer, Wiesinger, and Bengel, not to mention other commentators of less distinction. "In the highest fervor," says Bengel, "the apostle does not dismiss spiritual sobriety." There certainly was no need of his denying twice over what he had already denied in the strongest and only natural manner, by the words, "If by any means I may attain to the resurrection from the dead;" for no one could imagine that he had already experienced the resurrection and passed into the glorified state. Besides, it is evident that the word "perfect," in the last verse quoted above, cannot possibly refer to the perfection of saints in their glorified bodies. It can only relate to Christians here, including Paul himself. But if it refers to some or all of the Philippian Christians, together with the apostle, it must be used in a sense differing somewhat from that of the corresponding verb in the twelfth verse. Paul had not been made perfect in the full sense of the word, as applied to moral character; but, with many whom he addressed, he was a mature, full-grown

Christian, a man of rich and varied experience, far in advance, no doubt, of any who now read his letters with the greatest confidence in their own piety. The conclusion to which this examination leads is therefore obvious; namely, that Paul did not profess to live without sin, but looked upon moral perfection as a goal which he was striving earnestly to reach.

JOHN'S EXPERIENCE.

And the same may be said with equal confidence of John; for his own words afford the clearest evidence of his conviction of sin still remaining in his nature. "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from every sin" (1 John i. 7, *seq.*). Whether the word "cleanseth" here denotes the pardon of sin through the atoning death of Christ, according to the analogy of Lev. xvi. 30, — "On that day shall he make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord," — or whether it denotes an inward purification

through the influence of Christ's death (apprehended by faith) upon the heart, it is at any rate in the present tense, marking the effect of the atonement as continuous. It belongs not only to the past, but to the present, and it implies that there is *now* sin to be cleansed. Moreover, a proper translation of the Greek shows that it is not the root principle of sin, but rather every particular sin, which is being cleansed.

All this agrees with the next verse: "If we say that we have not sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." This statement includes the apostle himself in the number of those who have sin, and affirms that a denial of personal sinfulness as a present fact in all those embraced by the pronoun "we" must spring from self-deception, and imply a lack of thorough honesty of heart. It is a statement of remarkable clearness, depth, and power, needing nothing to make it more luminous and conclusive.

Yet it is confirmed by the following verse: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from every unrighteousness." These words take

it for granted that all Christians have not only sin, but "sins," not only evil in their nature, but evil that is manifested in feelings and actions which are sinful, and ought to be confessed. Hence they remind one of a petition in the prayer which Christ taught his disciples, to wit, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors," — a prayer which can hardly be supposed to contain any request unsuitable for believers at the present time. Yet the writer of these pages has been informed that some who profess to enjoy "the higher life" do not feel called upon to pray for the forgiveness of their sins. If this be so, they have grievously misunderstood the state of their own hearts and the teaching of the divine Word. The apostle adds, "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." By the first clause of this verse, sin is represented as a reality, passing over from the past into the present experience of John and his readers. For this is the natural force of the tense of the Greek verb used by the apostle; and, thus interpreted, the thought of the verse is in perfect

harmony with the preceding context and with the experience of nearly all Christians.

It has, indeed, been suggested to the writer by a professor of "the higher life," that John may have referred in verse eighth to a self-righteous person, who might say, "I have no sin to be forgiven," meaning, "I have never sinned." But it is evident that this letter of the apostle was written to those who were Christians by profession at least, while the language just used would have been an utter and outspoken rejection of Christianity. There is no evidence that any were admitted to the apostolic churches save those who trusted, or professed to trust, in Christ for the pardon of their sins; but there is evidence that some in the churches adopted the Antinomian view, that as Christians they were not under law, but under grace, and therefore could not sin. Against this perversion of the truth Paul had to contend earnestly; but against such a doctrine as the one supposed, namely, that some in the churches claimed that they had *never* sinned, there is no warning or argument in his letters. It may be added, that the view of the passage

in John, which has been set forth in this discussion, is sustained, so far as its main feature is concerned, by the almost unanimous judgment of interpreters.

From this brief study of passages in the letters of Paul and of John, it appears to be certain that neither of these "holy apostles" intended to speak of himself as living entirely without sin. They were devout, self-sacrificing, godly men. In singleness of aim, in strength of faith, in ardor of love, in efforts for the salvation of sinners, they have probably had no superiors. It is therefore necessary to conclude that "sinless perfection" does not appear in the lives of Christian men on earth. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

The topic discussed in this volume is one of so much importance at the present time, that it should be considered in the light of certain passages not yet examined. On the titlepage of a little book called "The Rest of Faith," stand

two verses: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28); and, "For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said" (Heb. iv. 3). The former passage contains a promise for all those who come to Christ, or take his yoke upon them; not for some, but for all; and it is fulfilled in every instance. But there is no evidence in the passage or context, that the fulfilment is not gradual, progressive, beginning here and culminating hereafter, affording an earnest of the inheritance in time and the full enjoyment of it in eternity. The latter passage asserts that believers in Christ are entering into the rest promised to the people of God. But whether they enjoy it fully in this life depends, perhaps, upon the sense of other verses in the connection. In one of these, the ninth, the sacred writer draws his conclusion thus: "So then there remaineth a sabbath-rest for the people of God," and then in the eleventh founds upon it his exhortation, "Let us therefore endeavor to enter into that rest, that no one may fall in the same example of unbelief." Because of their unbelief

most of the Israelites fell in the wilderness, without entering into the rest of Canaan; and the Hebrew Christians were in danger of departing in the same way from the true God. Hence the inspired writer exhorts them to "hold fast the beginning of their confidence firm unto the end." It is quite plain, therefore, that he is thinking of a heavenly rest, typified by that of Canaan, — a rest of which only a foretaste can be enjoyed in this earthly pilgrimage.

Two or three other expressions of the Epistle to the Hebrews are alleged in support of the claim that certain Christians lead a life free from sin. Among these is the exhortation, vi. 1: "Leaving the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection." The perfection here referred to is that of Christian understanding or knowledge; and according to the preceding verses that knowledge is progressive, requiring time, thought, and action for its attainment. "For though ye ought, on account of the time, to be teachers, ye again have need that some one teach you the first principles of the oracles of God;" and, "Solid food belongs to

those of full age, who by use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil." With Conant, Alford, and Noyes, we have translated a Greek adjective which literally signifies "perfect," or "perfect ones," by the phrase, "those of full age," for this without doubt is its sense in the passage quoted. And obviously the noun, "perfection," in the exhortation which follows, is used with reference to the same thing, maturity of Christian life and understanding. It is therefore quite certain that this exhortation ought never to be alleged in support of the view that certain Christians become, in the full sense of the word, perfect, either in understanding or in heart, while still in the flesh.

Another expression, which is sometimes alleged in support of the doctrine of "the higher life," may be found in Heb. vii. 25: "Whence also he is able to save to the utmost those who come to God through him, since he ever liveth to intercede for them." But this language says nothing whatever concerning the rapidity of the work by which the believer is brought to complete salvation. It simply declares that Christ

is able to accomplish fully the salvation of those who come to God through him, because he is an ever-living Intercessor for them; and this would be just as true if he were to complete the work of sanctification at death, and of glorification at the resurrection, as if he were to do the former at the instant of regeneration, and the latter at the instant of bodily death. It is surely surprising, that any one should ever have appealed to this passage in proof of the doctrine of sinless perfection on earth.

More plausible is the inference from another passage, ix. 14: "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" But the reference of this verse to the atonement of Christ, as sufficient to deliver the believer from a sense of condemnation, is clear. Whoever trusts in Christ may draw nigh to God without fear, and engage in his service. The blood of Christ gives him true peace and boldness; in proportion as he apprehends the value of that blood will his conscience have rest, with-

out being darkened. With this passage may be compared three others in the tenth chapter: "In which will we have been sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all;" "For by one offering hath he perfected forever those who are sanctified;" "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having had our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience," &c. In all these verses, the efficacy of the atonement for every one who believes is set forth. There is no hint of a division of Christians into classes. The perfection and sanctification referred to are perfection of *standing* in Christ, not perfection of *character* through his grace. In other words, the perfection and sanctification of the Hebrew Christians were as yet in Christ, not in themselves.

And all this agrees with a passage in the twelfth chapter: "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when reproved by him; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; but if ye are without chastisement, of

which all have been made partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." According to this language, the true children of God may expect chastisement, reproof, scourging; and a lack of these would be an argument against, not for, the fact of their adoption into his family. But the use of these implies something in their hearts and lives which deserves reproof, chastisement, scourging; and that something must be sin. For children are not wont to be chastised by their parents for weakness, imperfection, or even "little inconsistencies," but for wrong-doing, for disobedience, for neglecting what is required or doing what is forbidden.

EPISTLE OF JAMES.

There are sentences also in the Epistle of James which raise the standard of Christian life very high, and sharply condemn sin of every form. If exhortation to a strictly holy life were evidence that Christians did, in some instances, live such a life, it would be easy to find that evidence in the letter of James. But this is the only evidence of such living to be found in that

letter, and it is no evidence at all: it rather supposes a failure at this very point, so that the writer may consistently say, "For in many things we all offend" (iii. 2). And there is certainly no part of the New Testament which deals with religious experience in a less ideal or a more matter-of-fact way than the Epistle of James.

DOCTRINE OF PETER.

The theology of Peter has been characterized as the Theology of Hope; for no writer of the New Testament appears to give so prominent a place to hope in his account of Christian experience. To be sure, he speaks of his readers as "children of obedience," as "redeemed from their vain course of life with the precious blood of Christ," as "having purified their souls in obeying the truth," as "a holy nation," a "holy priesthood," as "established in the truth," and as having "a pure mind." Yet his letters prove that these expressions denote but a partial and incipient holiness; not a life conformed to the prescribed standard, but a life which recognizes

that standard and moves toward it. Hence the numerous exhortations and admonitions found in these Epistles: "As he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves holy in all your deportment;" "Pass the time of your sojourning in fear;" "Love one another from the heart fervently;" "Long for the spiritual, unadulterated milk, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation;" "Abstain from fleshly lusts, that war against the soul;" "Submit yourselves to every human institution, for the Lord's sake;" "Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king;" "Ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands;" "Ye husbands, in like manner, dwelling with them according to knowledge, giving honor to the female;" "Be sober, and watch unto prayer;" "Have your love to one another fervent;" "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time;" "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure;" "Be diligent that ye may be found without spot, and blameless in his sight, in peace;" "Beware lest ye fall from your own steadfastness;" "Grow in the grace

and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." These are samples of exhortation in the letters of Peter, and they presuppose an imperfect life in the Christians to whom they were addressed. Rest, holiness, perfection, were objects of hope, not of full possession. Peter therefore speaks of those to whom he wrote as begotten again to "a lively hope," — to "an inheritance imperishable, and undefiled, and unfading, reserved in heaven" for those "who are kept by the power of God through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." They are also exhorted to "hope perfectly for the grace that is to be brought to them at the revelation of Jesus Christ," and to "pass the time of their sojourning here in fear." Their "faith and hope" are said to be "on God;" and other expressions of a similar import are used. There seems therefore to be no reason to suppose that Peter thought of Christians in this life as belonging to two classes, one composed of persons simply justified, and the other composed of persons already sanctified. All are justified, and, as clothed in the righteousness of Christ,

all are sanctified; but none are yet perfect, living without sin. Thus James and Peter agree with Paul and John, while the Epistle to the Hebrews is in harmony with all the rest of the New Testament.

SUMMARY.

Christ reminds the young man that there is but one perfect standard of goodness, the character of God; he teaches his disciples to pray, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors;" and he commends the prayer of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Paul teaches that in the new man, having the Spirit of Christ, "the body is dead because of sin," while the Spirit is life because of righteousness;" that such a man "by the Spirit should mortify the deeds of the body," that he himself, feeling his own moral imperfection, and "forgetting the things behind," was "pressing toward the mark," and would have the Philippian Christians imitate his example in this respect. John declares that, "if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;" but,

"if we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." James asserts that "in many things we all offend." Peter represents the Christian life of his readers as imperfect, a life of hope rather than of fruition, yet exhorts them to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ. And the writer to the Hebrews assures them of a sabbath-rest into which they should seek to enter, while he reminds them of their slight progress in Christian virtue and knowledge. All these representations appear to be inconsistent with the current doctrine of "the higher life," and fully justify us in rejecting that doctrine as erroneous.

EVIDENCE OF EXPERIENCE.

SELF-KNOWLEDGE IMPERFECT.

IT is noticeable that those Christians who have passed into what has been called "the higher life" rely very confidently upon their own experience for proof of their doctrine. Indeed, some of them speak as if they knew their own hearts thoroughly; as if there were no secret places, no unseen depths, no unrecognized currents, in their souls; as if they could measure every instant the utmost capability of their spirits for love to God and man, and could therefore detect the slightest deficiency in the ardor or purity of that affection. But a moment's thought will convince any one that his self-knowledge is very imperfect. A Christian may certainly know in some degree what he *does* feel, whether of joy or of sorrow, of love or of wrath; but how can he know that it is all he *could* feel? He may be

sure that he has great peace and love; but how can he be certain that his peace is as deep, or his love as strong, as it *could* be?

SELF-APPROVAL UNTRUSTWORTHY.

But may not a Christian safely infer the moral condition of his soul from his knowledge of its conscious working merely? If some of the streams from this fountain are seen to be pure, must not the fountain itself be pure? We reply, that, in such a case, every thing depends on the perfection of the eye that sees, and the test of purity which is adopted; for a stream may be pure to one eye, and very impure to another; clean according to one test, and very unclean according to another. An imperfect Christian is therefore in danger of overrating the moral character of his conscious action. Until every film is removed from his spiritual eye, he is a fallible and partial judge of his own experience. Until he knows that his view of the action of his own heart is perfect, he cannot safely infer from that view that his heart is perfect. In other words, a man must be certain from some

other evidence that he is perfect, before he can appeal to his own consciousness in proof of his perfection. Hence, if the Word of God distinctly taught that some Christians would live without sin in the present world, no person could be certain of belonging to that number, except by a special revelation from God. How much less can he be certain of this, when the Word of God contains no such doctrine, but a holy apostle says: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves"!

IS UNBELIEF THE ROOT OF SIN?

Yet a possessor of "the higher life" writes as follows: "I can no longer accuse myself of unbelief, the root of all sin." Let us pause to ask, What evidence does the Bible afford that "unbelief is the root of all sin"? We are told that "the love of money is a root of all evil;" that, if a man "love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;" that "sin is the transgression of the law," and "love the fulfilling of the law;" that "God is love," and Christians should be "imitators of God;" but we are nowhere taught

that "unbelief is the root of all sin." It is, indeed, said that "whatsoever is not of faith is sin;" but, according to the connection, this only means that it is a sin for any person to do what he is not convinced is right: in other words, disobedience to conscience is always sinful. It is also said that "without faith it is impossible to please him;" but it is equally true that without love it is impossible to please him.

PURPOSE OF THE INDWELLING OF THE SPIRIT.

But the same writer proceeds thus: "What may be in me, below the gaze of consciousness, I do not know. If sin consists only in active energies, I am not conscious of such dwelling within me. If sin consists in a state, as some assert, I infer that I am not in such a state, from the absence of sinful energies flowing therefrom, and more especially from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit." To begin with the last clause: Does the indwelling of the Holy Spirit prove any man to be living without sin? If it does, then it proves every Christian to be thus living; for the apostle distinctly affirms

that, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." But it is not true, as this writer admits, that *all* Christians are thus living: hence it is not safe to infer that any one is so living, from the fact that the Holy Spirit dwells in him. Indeed, the Holy Spirit dwells in human hearts to make them holy, not because they are already sinless. To the previous argument, resting on his own unconsciousness of sin, our reply has been given above. His witness in respect to himself is untrustworthy; his eye may not be so clear as God's eye, nor his standard of duty so high as God's standard.

CONFIRMATION OF OUR VIEW.

But there are two other reasons why the testimony of those who enjoy "the higher life," as to the degree of sanctification which they have experienced, is unsatisfactory. And the first is this: they appear to watch the indications of grace in their hearts with far closer attention than they do the motions of sin. In some respects this may be wise; certainly it tends to the present comfort of the Christian; but it dis-

qualifies him to bear witness concerning "the law of sin in his members." Moreover, as a one-sided view of his inward life, it cannot be altogether salutary. Perhaps it is better to look chiefly at Christ in love and trust, without dwelling to any great extent on the excellence of that love and trust; but at all events it is certain that a man needs to search his heart very closely, as with the candle of the Lord, in order to be sure that sin does not lurk or nestle therein; and, if we may judge by their writings, this species of heart-searching is not characteristic of those who rejoice in "the higher life."

A second reason for distrusting their testimony in respect to the degree of sanctification which they have experienced is this: They assume that God has promised to deliver them now from all sin, if they believe aright; or, in other words, if they believe that he will do this very thing. Hence, knowing that God cannot lie, they conclude, from their conscious exercise of faith in this promise, that the work is actually done. The very character of their belief on the point in question tends to make them explain away

every thing that seems like sin in their desires or impulses, or to adopt a view of sin that agrees with their view of the promise of God. And so we are reminded that there is a Christian, in distinction from a divine, an angelic, or even an Adamic perfection, and are told that "whatsoever is of faith is not sin" ("Holiness through Faith"). But according to this view the standard of holiness is a fluctuating one, and for aught we can see some of the followers of Christ, who have bound their fellow-Christians to the rack or the stake for what was believed to be the mortal sin of heresy, may have been acting at the time "up to the given measure of light upon their duty," and were therefore free from sin. The error in this view is a dangerous one. Faith in Christ does not, as a matter of fact, render every act which partakes of it holy. Faith in Christ is acceptable to God, not because it makes the conduct of the believer in this life sinless, but because it unites the soul with Christ who has suffered for it. Faith in Christ and him crucified is peculiarly the act of a sinner who is conscious of his guilt. Rahab and Samson had

faith, but they were not free from sin. And of one thing at least we may be sure, — that the Scriptures nowhere teach that "whatsoever is of faith is not sin."

THE HIGHER LIFE EXPERIENCE ONE-SIDED.

But is the peculiar experience of those who profess "the higher life" to count for nothing? Far from it. The writer believes it to be one type of Christian experience, and on many accounts a very interesting type. If it is not, in his judgment, the highest known to the Church, it is not certainly the lowest. If it is one-sided, like every thing else in man, it has certain elements which go toward making up a perfect character. If such sentences as these: "I felt, I knew, that I was accepted fully of Jesus," and "For several years I have done the trusting, and Jesus the keeping," awaken surprise, and lead one to ask, "Was a believer ever *partially* accepted by Jesus? Is not trusting a work of the Spirit by which the believer is kept?" (1 Pet. i. 5), yet there are other expressions in the same account which betoken a deep sense of the

Saviour's presence and love. If we miss in the writings of such men the exhortation, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," or, "Be diligent to make your calling and election sure," we find the more welcome exhortation, "Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, Rejoice;" "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known of God; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus;" and such passages are used in them with a natural earnestness and pathos impossible to any but those in whose hearts the love of God has been shed abroad by the Holy Ghost. If they sometimes claim an almost inspired guidance in answer to prayer, and look to the Spirit more than to the Word for light in respect to doctrine and duty, they evidently appreciate more correctly than many others the providence of God in the daily concerns of life, find greater peace in a practical reliance on Christ for help in every time of need, and give a larger place in thought and feeling to

spiritual things. If they seem to forget that "we are saved by hope," and that it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we shall at last be like him, because we shall see him as he is; if they seem to undervalue the ministry of death by which we are separated from the allurements of sense, and translated to our home with the Lord; if they seem to think less than did the apostles of the change which the resurrection will effect by completing the redemption of our whole nature; if they seem to attach undue importance to the earnest of joy in this life as compared with the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory which is to be received in the life to come; if they seem to delight in certain truths, to the obvious neglect or the manifest dislike of others, thus proving their piety to be intense in a certain direction, instead of full and true in all directions, — if this, as we think, is true, it is also true that they appear to have a very sweet spirit of trust in the Lord, and a very strong assurance of his love; that they delight in prayer, and testify aloud of the grace which they have received; and that they exhibit a profound interest in the stage

or type of religious experience which has been vouchsafed to them. Indeed, there are many, very many Christians, who must be regarded as far behind them in faith and zeal, in whose minds and hearts this present world holds a much larger place than it does in some who enjoy "the higher life."

ANOTHER TYPE OF EXPERIENCE.

But, on the other hand, there are not a few, ignorant of the peculiar experience in question, who, saying little of their own progress and nothing of a "second conversion," seeing much sin in their own hearts and humbling themselves before God on account of it, confessing that in many things they offend and fail of perfection in all, yet wholly trust in Christ, and devote their energies with life-consuming zeal to his service; who work in the darkest places at home, or go far hence to the heathen; who esteem others better than themselves, and look after the spiritual good of others as tenderly as after their own; who are renewed day by day in the inner man, and constrained by the love of Christ to warn

men night and day with tears; who are pressed and bowed down by the weight of care for others, so that they would even die but for the grace of Christ. And the piety of these seems to the writer in more perfect accord with the whole truth, as taught by inspired men, than the piety which has been denominated "the higher life." The conditions of silent but certain growth are in it. The work of faith and labor, of love and patience, of hope, are manifestions of it. It is lowly, teachable, self-distrustful, but at the same time earnest, active, uplooking. The alternative is not, therefore, between standing in shade at the foot of a mountain, or in light on its top; between weak faith and lukewarm affection on the low plane of justification, or strong assurance and perfect love on the high plane of sanctification. The statement of that alternative leaves out of sight a great multitude of the truest and most self-denying followers of Christ in every age of the Church, and may almost be said to do dishonor to the grace of God in the history of his people; but there is no reason in the actual experience of "the higher life" for making it.

EVIDENCE OF OBSERVATION.

IT is commonly asserted by professors of "the higher life," that faith in Christ and self-surrender to him, though only partial, are necessary in order to a state of justification, while the faith must become absolute and the self-surrender complete in order to a state of sanctification. The former of these are conditions of the new life, the latter of "the higher life;" and the inward transition from the second state to the third is scarcely less marked than that from the first to the second. The entrance into "the higher life" may therefore be called with some propriety a "second conversion," lifting one as far above the ordinary life of believers as regeneration raises him above the life of unbelievers. In so far as this claim rests upon experience, it has been sufficiently examined; but there is another test which may be justly applied by those who have not the experience, namely,

the test of *observation.* "By their fruits ye shall know them," said the Holy One. "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit." This is a severe test, no doubt, and liable to abuse; yet, when fairly applied, it is as likely to reveal the truth as any other, save the Word of God. What then, if their theory be correct, might be expected of those who enjoy "the higher life?"

A LOWLY MIND.

Lowliness of mind might be expected. For this was characteristic of the Lord Jesus, and must be, therefore, of all who resemble him. But what is a lowly mind, and how does it find expression? Paul suggests an answer to the former question, by exhorting the Philippians to "think each other better than themselves" (ii. 3); and Peter furnishes an answer to the latter in these words: "Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (1 Pet. v. 5). Genuine humility tends to make one see more good in others than in himself, and more evil in himself than in

others. Whether this spirit is sufficiently characteristic of those brethren who rejoice in "the higher life," to justify their claim, the writer will not attempt to decide. It is, however, a point to be carefully considered by every one who makes the claim.

A DOCILE SPIRIT.

A teachable spirit might be expected. There are truths which every Christian is willing to learn, lines of progress in knowledge which are almost certain to lead him into green pastures and beside the still waters. But this cannot be said of all truth. There are doctrines which are firmly believed by some, and greatly disliked by others. A devout Calvinist finds the doctrine of personal election in the Scriptures, but a devout Arminian is consciously unwilling to discover it there. An honest Baptist insists, that, according to the New Testament, nothing but the immersion of believers in water is Christian baptism, while a sincere Pedobaptist is strongly repelled by his feeling from this view. Thus Christians are separated into various sects. Is the Word of God at fault in this matter? Is

the light so faint that truth cannot be reached by candid study? We trow not. The fault is rather with the followers of Christ, who are not disposed to welcome all truth.

But what influence has "the higher life" upon its confessors in this respect? Are they rendered by it, in any marked degree, more willing to examine the evidence for a doctrine which they dislike? Does the Presbyterian who enjoys "the rest of faith" feel sure that his Methodist brother who has just obtained the same blessing, under a different name, will listen with greater candor than before to reasons for the doctrine of election? Or does the Baptist of like experience approach his Presbyterian brother of "the higher life," with confidence in his willingness to weigh the evidence for believers' baptism more fairly than he would have done when only a common Christian? Here is a test worthy of being applied by those who profess to have surrendered themselves to the Lord, so that they have no will but his. We pretend not to single out the brethren who are in error, be they Baptists or Presbyterians, Methodists or Lutherans, Catho-

lics or Quakers: it is enough to know that some of them must be in error, while assuredly their life, if it were moving on as high a plane as they suppose, would lead them to embrace truth which they now reject. The writer may be allowed to testify that he has known some professors of "the higher life" to be utterly averse to the plain duty of searching the Scriptures for light in regard to certain points of Christian doctrine or action. This may not be true of all; but there is reason to fear that too many are more inclined to be guided by their impressions, given, as they believe, in answer to prayer, than by a faithful study of the Holy Book.

A BENEVOLENT HEART.

Great benevolence might also be expected. For "the end of the law is love, out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned." "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" "The love of money is a root of all evil." "If any man love the world, the

love of the Father is not in him." These sentences are easily repeated, but no finite mind ever exhausted their meaning. Faith works by love, or it is dead; and on earth there is no true love without self-sacrifice. We must suffer with Christ for the good of men, if we would be glorified with him. By the process of sanctification, be it gradual or instantaneous, the believer is changed into the moral likeness of Christ, "who, though he was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich." Now, it may be said that our Christian brethren who, through perfect self-devotement and unqualified trust, are blessed with "the rest of faith," have been delivered from the love of money, the desire of fame, the spirit of self-indulgence, and do steadily illustrate the unselfish virtues of a sanctified heart; that the most ardent lovers of their race, the most self-sacrificing missionaries, the stanchest heroes and martyrs of the faith, belong to this class. If this be so, it is a circumstance highly important; but even this would not prove their doctrine correct throughout: else we might accept the Moravian creed

without consulting our Bibles. But, if it is not so, their doctrine must be erroneous; for the very pith and marrow of that doctrine is comprehended in the claim that they have reached, by the grace of God, a Christian life distinctly higher than that of other believers, a state of holiness either perfect or closely akin to perfection; and from the nature of the case such a life must be one of pre-eminent unselfishness and devotion to the good of men. The writer is not satisfied by any information within his reach that "the higher life" is able to meet this test, and relieve itself from the charge of error. Certainly he has known many, and read of more, who, while lamenting the weakness of their faith and confessing daily their sins, were ready to spend and be spent for the salvation of the lost, were willing and eager to go far hence to the Gentiles, and were remarkable for glorying everywhere, not in themselves, but in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The objections which the writer feels to the current doctrine of "the higher Christian life" may be re-stated briefly as follows: —

TIERS OF CHRISTIANS.

It departs from the plain sense of Scripture in dividing Christians into two sections, or tiers, one above the other, and separated by a change similar and subsequent to regeneration. Of such a change and division there appears to be no evidence in the New Testament. According to that volume every one who is in Christ is a new creature, begotten of God, a temple of the Holy Ghost. In one Spirit all are baptized into one body. Under one King they all constitute a royal priesthood, a holy nation. In stature they differ every one from his fellow like the trees of a forest; and it would be as natural to divide them into ten classes as into two.

PROGRESS OF SPIRITUAL LIFE.

It departs from the plain sense of Scripture in explaining the progress of spiritual life in the soul. For the sacred writers represent that progress as a "growth" dependent on the grace and truth of Christ; and growth is an almost imperceptible increase of life and power: it

cometh not with observation. Or, they describe it as a "renewal" which is repeated day by day, and not accomplished once for all. Or, they speak of it as a "cleansing" of the person from sin, which must be evermore necessary till death comes. But the doctrine in question puts into this process a sort of "second conversion," by which the soul rises in a moment into a totally different atmosphere.

BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT, AND PROPHECY.

It departs from the obvious sense of Scripture in claiming for Christians through all time the promise of baptism in the Holy Spirit and of the gift of prophecy. The motive which leads to an assertion of this claim may consist chiefly in a hidden desire to find the doctrine of "the higher life" in the New Testament; but the tendency of it is to destroy all confidence in the Bible as the sole standard and test of Christian truth. For, if the same inspiration which was given to prophets in the apostolic age is possessed by the brethren of "the higher life" now, the former have no more claim to our confidence than the

latter. Either the prophets of the first age, and the brethren of "the higher life" in all ages, are to be considered infallible when speaking in the Spirit; or neither the one nor the other can be trusted as infallible. If the former hypothesis be accepted as correct, the Pope of Rome may not be infallible, but there are many persons in Europe and America who are so; if the latter be accepted, there is nowhere any ultimate authority in matters of Christian faith. Dr. Mahan may be prepared to accept one of these two positions, as he must in order to justify his work on the "Baptism of the Holy Ghost;" but the writer is not prepared to do this, having as yet too much reverence for the Holy Scriptures.

STANDARD OF HOLINESS.

It departs, or tends to depart, from the plain sense of Scripture in regard to the standard of holiness for Christians. That standard, according to Christ himself, is the character of God. To this standard he referred the young ruler who came to him with the question, "Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" by

replying, "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but God only" (Luke xviii. 18, 19). For the manifest purpose of Christ was to lift the young man's eye from merely human and therefore imperfect standards of goodness, to the divine and perfect one. And he presented this, not as a standard for angels or for Adam, but for all men: it is the only true standard for man as he is. And there is no greater absurdity in religion than to suppose that the standard of holiness has been lowered for the servants of Christ. But the most earnest and conspicuous defenders of the doctrine under examination have again and again set up a different and lower standard of moral obligations for Christians. If they act, it is said, day by day up to the given measure of light upon duty, if they "overcome all discerned evil," they are living without sin; a sentiment which is not scriptural.

SINLESSNESS.

It departs, or tends to depart, from the plain sense of Scripture by asserting that some who enjoy "the higher life" live without sin. There

are many, indeed, who hold the doctrine in question, without laying claim to perfection of Christian life; but they seem to be neither grieved nor shocked by the language of their brethren who claim such perfection. We can hardly be in error, therefore, when we say that the doctrine of "the higher life" tends strongly to the doctrine of "sinless perfection." But it seems to us plainly unscriptural to assert that any Christian on earth lives without sin. The words of Christ to the young man as quoted above, the words of John in the first chapter of his first epistle, and the words of James, "We all offend," are directed squarely against this error, and are singularly forcible and unambiguous.

UNDERVALUING THE WORD.

It departs, or at least seems to depart, from the plain sense of Scripture by ascribing the believer's sanctification to the work of the Spirit, almost without the use of truth. Very little comparatively is said of the office of truth. The substance of the entire process is summed up by

one writer in the words, "For several years I have done the trusting, and Jesus the keeping;" Jesus, of course, being supposed to keep his people by the Holy Spirit. But it is the doctrine of Peter that God keeps Christians *through faith*, or by means of trust, unto salvation. It is by sustaining and nourishing, first, faith in Christ, and then love and hope, that Christians are sanctified. A servant of Jesus does the trusting in no other sense than he does the loving, the hoping, the watching, the praying, the striving. To all these the Lord moves him by the joint agency of his Spirit and his Word. The idea of simple passive trust springing from the human heart, as the God-appointed condition of sanctifying grace from Christ, is foreign to the Bible.

To these objections founded on the Sacred Record might be added a number taken from the history of the Christian religion, showing in the *first* place, that persons who claim the special guidance of the Spirit in all things have been proven to undervalue the sure word of God and the proper helps to its interpretation; and, in the

second place, that such persons have been found no more stable in character, pure in faith, and self-sacrificing in life, than large numbers who are conscious of no peculiar light from the Spirit.

PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION.

IF it is a mistake to suppose that the type of Christian experience known as "the higher life" is more than a very imperfect and one-sided development, leaving much of darkness, error, and sin in the soul, it would be no less a mistake to regard any other type of Christian experience as perfect. Yet a different type may have at least this advantage, that it includes a full recognition of remaining darkness and sin, and impels the soul to cry out more earnestly for help in the conflict with evil. To say more than this by way of comparison would be unprofitable. "We venture not," says an apostle, "to reckon ourselves among, or to compare ourselves with, some of those who commend themselves; but they, measuring themselves among themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves, are not wise." Those words contain an important hint for all.

DESCRIPTION OF SANCTIFICATION.

It may, however, be well to close this discussion with a statement of what is comprised in full sanctification, and of the means by which it is attained. To be of any value, this statement must be drawn from the word of God, and therefore the language of Christ, as preserved by Paul, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," will be a convenient starting-point, for it casts a flood of light upon the nature of men. Assuming, as we must, that the true blessedness of man depends upon a right use of all his powers and capacities, it appears from this sentence that he has a spiritual constitution, which qualifies him both to receive and to impart good. He is made to be a beneficiary, and also to be a benefactor. His moral perfection must therefore consist in the greatest possible activity and growth of these two sides of his being, — the capacity to receive, and the power to give. He is dependent on God for being, faculty, and grace; without God he is nothing, and can do nothing. A full and joyful recognition of this

fact, accompanied with perfect openness of soul to divine influence, is necessary to holiness. Toward God he must be wholly and gratefully receptive, longing for his favor as life, and for his loving kindness as better than life, and trusting him absolutely in storm and in calm. But this is only one side of a holy life. Love is said to be greater than faith, and giving more blessed than receiving. This would be incredible, were it not asserted by the very highest authority. For who would imagine that any thing could be more blissful than to welcome the peace of God into the soul, than to feel the currents of eternal life flowing into one's heart from the true vine? Yet there is a more joyful experience than this, — the experience of bearing fruit, of imparting good, the out-going, self-forgetting, triumphant activities of love. With unrivalled clearness of vision the disciple whom Jesus loved saw in his blessed Master the image of the Father, and, in words marvellous alike for their simplicity and power, declared that "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." Perfect love must there-

fore be united with perfect trust in order to full sanctification. Let either of them be weak, and the other will suffer. If "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, or the pride of life," still maintains the slightest hold upon the heart, by so much will faith and love be weakened, and the believer's character fall below the standard of holiness. If self-will or self-indulgence, if scepticism or credulity, if disrelish of any truth or attachment to any error, yet lingers in the spirit, it is a sign of the old nature: sin is still there casting its shadow on every act, and all conceit of perfection is folly.

MEANS OF SANCTIFICATION.

It cannot, however, be denied that faith and love are capable of increase; nor can it be doubted that evil desires may be weakened, if not wholly eradicated. By this double process is Christian character improved, ennobled, purified, in the present life.

DOCTRINE OF PETER.

Both the fact and the means of this improve-

ment are indicated by the words of Peter, "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." This language is generally understood as an exhortation to Christians to seek more grace and knowledge from the Lord, or to make progress in respect to grace and knowledge. But it calls upon them rather to grow in spiritual strength by living in the atmosphere of the grace and truth of Christ. In other words, grace and truth are the elements in and by which the power and beauty of their new life are to be increased. They are the divinely appointed means of spiritual enlargement or sanctification. But, when the grace of Christ is thus distinguished from his truth, the former refers to the work of the Holy Spirit, and the latter to the gospel. Sanctification, then, is carried forward by the influence of the Holy Spirit and of Christian truth upon the hearts of believers. This is the doctrine of Peter.

PRAYER OF CHRIST.

And the language of Christ in his prayer for his own implies the same doctrine; for that

prayer, "Sanctify them in thy truth; thy word is truth," ascribes the work of sanctification to God acting by his Spirit, but recognizes the Word of God as the element in which the work is to be accomplished. Accordingly believers are sanctified, not by the Spirit dwelling alone in the soul, and cleansing by his simple energy the susceptibilities and affections, regarded as the springs of moral life, but by the Spirit dwelling in the soul, and disposing it to seek and welcome the truth as it is in Jesus, by the Spirit revealing through the Word the things of Christ to the mind and heart. This view accounts for the description which John gives of Christ as "full of grace and truth," and for his statement that "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." It also explains the declaration of our Lord to his disciples, "The words which I have spoken to you, they are spirit and are life." Faith, hope, and love are filled with fresh life and vigor by the truth concerning Jesus, which was imparted to the apostles by his own lips, or by the Holy Spirit, and which is offered to us in the written Word.

RELATION OF THE SPIRIT TO THE WORD.

Moreover, as the Scriptures present to our minds all the religious truth necessary to spiritual progress here, in language sufficiently clear and strong, it may probably be said without rashness that the work of the Spirit in sanctification now consists in opening the heart to receive that truth, in helping it recall the part of that truth which is most needed at any given moment for the soul's good, in moving it to plead with God for holy impulse to do his will, and in giving by direct action and the power of suggested truth that impulse to service. At any rate, the Holy Spirit does not take the place of the written Word, so that a devout Christian may expect to grow up to the stature of a perfect man without faithful study of the Scriptures.

THE CHRISTIAN'S AGENCY.

Looking again at the exhortation of Peter, "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," it will be seen that this exhortation suggests more than growth and

the objective means of this growth ; it suggests also some kind of voluntary agency in those addressed. Hence only can the form of exhortation be explained. And this voluntary agency cannot be limited to communion with God by prayer, study of the Scriptures, and meditation on the truth : it also includes direct obedience to the will of God, or at least a willingness to obey. For our Lord affirms, that, " If any one is willing to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself." The spirit of obedience is therefore pre-requisite to a right view of Christian truth, just as a right view of that truth is prerequisite to spiritual growth. A believer's progress in sanctification must therefore be determined in no small degree by his readiness to obey the commands of Christ. It is not, then, surprising that some are far in advance of others, nor should it be esteemed wonderful that many seem to make no progress at all. Yet there is reason to hope, that, wherever there is life, there is some kind of growth, and reason to believe that in no instance is that growth unobstructed by sin, till

death comes, and the "old man" is left behind by the released spirit.

GROWTH VARIABLE.

Another remark is perhaps necessary to a just statement of the case; namely, that growth is not uniform through all the periods of Christian life. It varies with the seasons. It has times of cold and drought; times when the inner currents are dull and slow; times when darkness and storm prevail, and the very roots of faith are strained to the utmost; times, therefore, when growth seems to be arrested. But it has also times of manifest and rapid advance, when all things within and without hasten it on, when heaven stoops with blessing, and holy sunlight and shower refresh the spirit; times when the potencies of faith and love leap forth in a thousand currents of surprising volume and purity; times when one rises from a lower plane to a higher, as in a moment, and rejoices in a new sense of the divine grace; and these times would be far more frequent if Christians were more given to prayer and labor.

PRESSING TOWARD THE MARK.

Let no one be disheartened at the account now given of sanctification. Let no one doubt the wisdom of God in postponing our complete likeness to Christ till we see him as he is. Let no one feel that the lessons which he learns by earthly experience, after his eyes have been opened to the plague and bitterness of sin in his own heart, will be of no service to him hereafter. And let no one forget that ample provision has been made for his rapid spiritual growth and purification here on earth. But one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. His work is sure and for eternity. Meanwhile it is for us to look upon all sin with deep abhorrence, and upon perfect holiness with ardent desire. It is for us to imitate the apostle, and, forgetting the things behind, reach forth unto the things before, and press toward the mark for the prize of the heavenly calling in Christ Jesus. Our country is in heaven. Our true life is hid with Christ in God. We are on our way to a city that hath

foundations; and we cannot be too careful to live as strangers and pilgrims while in the flesh, "pursuing Duty, though we do not overtake her."

We may not be translated by divine grace in a moment of time, from spiritual childhood to maturity; but we may go from strength to strength, until every one of us shall appear before God in peace. The path which leads us from unbroken darkness to perpetual day may be "rough and long;" but it will end at last in the celestial city, — error dissipated, selfishness overcome, love made perfect. There may be a great conflict here with the powers of evil within, but faith is sure of victory. Then let us press toward the mark! Let us keep the end in view, and "so run, as not uncertainly; so fight, as not beating the air." For "we do it to obtain an incorruptible crown." Putting ourselves in company with the apostle, "let us run with patience the race set before us."

"Strive, man, to win the glory;
Toil, man, to gain the light;
Send hope before to grasp it,
Till hope be lost in sight."

BUNYAN'S ALLEGORY.

In his "Holy War," John Bunyan represents the Prince as warning his recovered Mansoul that there were some "friends of Diabolus," "sturdy and implacable," "yet remaining in the town;" and as saying on that account, "Wherefore, O Mansoul, thy work as to this will be so much the more difficult and hard, — that is, to take, mortify, and put them to death, according to the will of my Father. Nor can you utterly rid yourselves of them unless you should pull down the walls of your town, the which I am by no means willing you should do." But he promises after a time to do this himself, "For yet a little while, O my Mansoul, even after a few more times are gone over thy head, I will take down this famous town of Mansoul, stick and stone, to the ground; and I will carry the stones thereof, and the timber thereof, and the walls thereof, and the dust thereof, and the inhabitants thereof, into mine own country, even into a kingdom of my Father; and I will there set it up in such strength and glory as it never did see

in the kingdom where now it is placed. Then will I make it a spectacle of wonder, a monument of mercy, and the admirer of its own mercy. And then thou shalt, O my Mansoul! have such communion with me, with my Father, and with your lord secretary, as is not possible here to be enjoyed, nor even could be shouldst thou live in universe the space of a thousand years. There thou shalt not need captains, engines, soldiers, and men of war. There thou shalt meet with no sorrow nor grief; nor shall it be possible that any Diabolian should again forever be able to creep into thy skirts, burrow in thy walls, or be seen again within thy borders, all the days of eternity. Life shall there last longer than here you are able to desire it should; and yet it shall always be sweet and new, nor shall any impediment attend it forever."

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